Rec. West. Aust. Mus. 1993, 16(3): 459-460

VARIICHTHYS, A REPLACEMENT NAME FOR THE TERAPONTID FISH GENUS *VARIA* AND FIRST RECORD OF *V. LACUSTRIS* FROM AUSTRALIA

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Vari (1978) revised the family Terapontidae (spelled Theraponidae or Teraponidae by some authors). These perch-like fishes inhabit the Indo-West Pacific region with 33 of 45 known species being confined to fresh waters of Australia and New Guinea. Vari provisionally assigned *Therapon jamoerensis* Mees (1971) from southern New Guinea to the genus "*Terapon*". He stated that it belonged to a new genus, but failed to describe it because of its uncertain relationships. Although he did not examine specimens of *Therapon lacustris* Mees and Kailola (1977), Vari mentioned in the addendum of his 1978 work that it was possibly the sister species of *T. jamoerensis*.

Allen (1991) eventually placed the two species in a new genus *Varia*. However, Carl J. Ferraris, Jr. of the Department of Ichthyology at the American Museum of Natural History (New York) recently informed the author that this generic name is preoccupied. Walker (1867) described *Varia* as a new genus of moths (Lepidoptera). Therefore, its use for terapontid fishes is invalid. The replacement name *Variichthys* is proposed herein.

A brief diagnosis of this genus is presented below and the first record of its presence in Australia is noted.

Variichthys, nom. nov.

Varia Allen, 1991: 128 (preoccupied by *Varia* Walker 1867, a genus of Lepidoptera).

Type species
Therapon jamoerensis Mees, 1971: 214.

Diagnosis

A genus of terapontid fishes characterised by the following combination of features: posttemporal bone covered externally with skin and scales, not expanded posteriorly, and not having a serrate posterior margin; two fin spines arising from the first proximal dorsal pterygiophore; lateral-line scale count 55-66; each jaw with a band of fixed (non-depressible), conical teeth, the outer row somewhat enlarged; dorsal rays XII to XIV, 10 or 11; anal rays III, 8 or 9; pectoral rays 14 or 15; gill rakers on first arch 5 or 6+1+10 or 11; vertebrate 11+14.

Remarks

The genus contains two species: *V. jamoerensis* (Mees), **comb. nov.** known only from Lake

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Jamur (sometimes spelled Jamoer or Yamur) in Irian Jaya (approximately 3°39'S, 134°58'E) and *V. lacustris* (Mees and Kailola), **comb. nov.** formerly thought to be confined to the Fly River Delta region of Papua New Guinea (see comments below).

FIRST RECORD OF *V. LACUSTRIS* FROM AUSTRALIA

A specimen of *V. lacustris* was recently presented to the author by Gordon Stables of Cairns, Queensland. A number of individuals were caught (all released except one) with a seine net by Mr. Stables in Twelve-Mile Lagoon, Mitchell River Drainage, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland (approximately 16°24'S, 143°09'E) in September 1992. This specimen is now deposited in the collection of the Western Australian Museum (reg. no. WAM P.30652-001). The species was previously known only from the Fly River Delta of Papua New Guinea, including the Balimo area, Morehead River, Lake Murray, and the lower Fly River (Allen, 1991). It is apparently common in Twelve Mile Lagoon in the Mitchell River system and future collecting will probably reveal a broader distribution on Cape York Peninsula.

Counts and measurements for the specimen (164.2 mm SL) from Twelve-Mile Lagoon are as follows: dorsal rays XIII,10; anal rays III,8; pectoral rays 14; tubed lateral-line scales 63; scales in horizontal row just above lateral line 73; gill rakers on first arch 6+1+10; maximum body depth 66 mm; maximum body width 28.5 mm; head length 46.0 mm; snout length 13.2 mm; upper jaw length 13.8 mm; eye diametre 11.1 mm; predorsal length 64.6 mm; prepelvic length 62.3 mm; preanal length 111.1 mm; least depth of caudal peduncle 20.8; length of caudal peduncle 32.3 mm; length of dorsal fin base 92.4 mm; longest (fourth) dorsal spine 30.2 mm; longest (first) soft dorsal ray 23.8 mm; length of anal fin base 29.5 mm; longest (second) anal spine 26.9 mm SL; longest (first) soft anal ray 26.5 mm; length of caudal fin 43.0 mm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Gordon Stables for donating the specimen of *V. lacustris* to the WAM fish collection. Special thanks are also due Carl Ferraris, Jr. for his discovery of the preoccupied status of *Varia*.

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Received 28 June 1993 Accepted 10 August 1993 Published 25 October 1993